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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes selected successful experiences of the Participation and Equity Programme (PEP) in Western Australian government schools from 1984 to 1986. The strategy of the PEP was to first promote increased awareness of selected educational issues, and then to support schools in their responses to locally determined educational needs. The contributors to this report all had significant involvement with the PEP in a school context: either as a project coordinator or consultant to schools in which significant and successful PEP activity had taken place, or as a teacher or administrator in such a school. Contributors were invited to reflect on the long-term benefits the PEP had brought about; on the professional and administrative challenges which it had presented; and on the possible consequences of its termination. Transcripts of the interviews comprise the data from which this document was developed. (JD)

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Participation and Equity:
Western Australian Perspectives

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This document was prepared for the State Advisory Committee, Participation and Equity Programme, by C. J. Duffill (14 St Leonard's Avenue, Leederville 6007) under contract dated 01/09/87, and was delivered to the Executive Officer of the Committee on 31/03/88.

The opinion which is represented in this report is that of 22 individual contributors, who were selected on the basis of their significant involvement with successful implementation of Participation and Equity projects in one of five Western Australian government secondary schools. All shared their time, their experiences, and their opinions willingly and generously.

This is greatly appreciated.

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"PEP really caught people's imagination. I saw a lot of people get a whole new burst of enthusiasm, sometimes way out of proportion to the small amount of money that might have been involved in a particular project. Something about PEP excited people. I'm still not quite sure what it was, but it was a kind of optimism, something to do with a feeling that we really might be able to make schools better places for kids to be in."

Summary

Extended interviews were recorded with 22 teachers, administrators, and consultants to schools, all of whom had significant involvement with the Participation and Equity Programme in a school context. Interviews were intended to facilitate reflection and to record the expression of opinion relating to the long term general effects of the Programme at school level; to the professional and administrative challenges which it had presented; and to the possible consequences of its discontinuance. Reference was made to Programme objectives, but not in order to limit discussion: a 'goal-free' approach was taken, as it was anticipated that some of the perceived benefits of the Programme would be only indirectly related to the Commonwealth's objectives.

There was complete agreement that Participation and Equity involvement had been of great advantage. Programme guidelines were seen as having been instrumental in shaping the educational strategies of the school, and access to Programme funds were thought to have been essential to the achievement of the significant school improvement which was reported.

Both personally and professionally, the impact of PEP on many teachers was profound. PEP experience is described as having been 'exciting', 'stimulating', 'liberating', 'rewarding': even though it invariably meant extra work, extra problems, and extra pressure. The consequences have been widespread increased commitment to the profession; greater awareness of professional issues; a real concern for improving professional skills; and renewed professional optimism, confidence and assertiveness.

At the same time, PEP moved schools towards new levels of 'self determination': educational needs and priorities were considered at school level, and comprehensive school plans were developed; decision-making processes were reviewed to become more participative, taking formal account of the professional competence and commitment of the whole staff; real effort and real progress towards significant community and student involvement in school affairs was made.

Problems in implementing change included the loss of key personnel through untimely transfer; the lack of any systematic recognition of the considerable extra effort which was often needed; and unsatisfactory teacher relief arrangements. The consultancy service which was developed by the Secondary Schools Development Support Unit was highly regarded, and was credited with the avoidance of many difficulties, and that Unit's administrative efficiency was noted and valued by school-based staff.

In many ways, PEP seems to have effectively prepared a number of schools for the challenges of the immediate future. If the Ministry's current drive towards 'Better Schools' is to be successful, then the insights, the skills, and the strategies developed in schools, in the consultancy service, and in the Secondary Schools Development Support Unit need to be examined, need to be understood, and most importantly, need to be used.

1. Introduction

This report is intended to summarise selected *successful* experience of the Participation and Equity Programme in Western Australian government schools from 1984 to 1986.

The programme was essentially about school improvement. The strategy was first to promote increased awareness of selected educational issues, and then to support schools in their responses to locally determined educational needs. The results have been quite remarkable.

A panel of School Development Consultants nominated 22 contributors to this report, all of whom had significant involvement with the Participation and Equity Programme in a school context: either as a project coordinator or consultant to schools in which significant and successful PEP activity had taken place, or as a teacher or administrator in such a school. Interviews with individual contributors were recorded and transcribed. Contributors were invited to reflect on the the long term benefits which the programme had brought about; on the professional and administrative challenges which it had presented; and on the possible consequences of its termination. Transcripts of the interviews comprised the data from which this document was developed.

Additional background information is provided in appended material: details of procedure are included in Appendix 1 ('Technical Notes').

2. Participation and Equity: the general view

Clearly, the Participation and Equity Programme - as implemented in the five Western Australian schools which were studied for this report - had a profound effect on many teachers. For some, it was instrumental in bringing about a renewed and enthusiastic commitment to the profession:

"I sometimes wonder if I would have been as motivated as I am now, and would even still want to continue teaching if it hadn't been for PEP. It gave a glimmer of hope to those of us who are professional and motivated, and who believe in what we're doing. It was like recognition. People were at long last realising that ordinary classroom teachers actually had something worthwhile to contribute."

"I suppose one of the great benefits of PEP was that it was professionally very exciting. At our school, I'd say 20 or 30 teachers were given a new lease of life, and were given the opportunity to go out and do something that they thought would be fabulous for kids. They were given time to work together - time that teachers don't usually have. Professionally it was just so stimulating for us. We worked out various directions we were going to go in, looking at school structure and how kids might benefit if we changed it."

Of all the consequences of school involvement in Participation and Equity - and many were suggested by the teachers, administrators and consultants who were interviewed - that which is the most remarkable, the most valued, and the most difficult to explain, is a result of the extraordinary capacity of the programme to change in a most fundamental way the attitude of teachers towards their task.

"It's the renewed enthusiasm of teachers that's been most important, and which is going to have long term benefits."

Other Commonwealth programmes have had significant effects in Western Australian schools, and of course successful state and regional initiatives in education are common. But no other single programme seems to be recalled by those who have worked in it with quite the enthusiasm as is PEP. Why this should be so is not immediately obvious, but there is an important message somewhere in the Participation and Equity experience for all those who are

concerned with the reform of educational practice and of educational administration in this state. Teachers speak of PEP and seem to have responded to PEP as if its philosophy, presentation, timing, and administrative style had been 'just right'. This may simply have been a matter of unusually good luck, but it is more likely to have been a matter of good judgment: of real understanding of the dynamics of change in the context of our schools, and of skilful management of resources and personnel.

In retrospect, teachers value two particular characteristics of PEP in their schools. The first - an opportunity to become involved in educational issues in a context broader than that of the classroom - was a result of the requirement that 'a whole school approach' be developed to locally perceived educational priorities.

"PEP brought me out of the classroom into a committee structure, and that made me a better person: it led me to a greater awareness of kids and their problems, and of parents and their problems. The committee work was good. You had to listen to what everyone had to say, because the kids were there. You couldn't look bored or say 'I don't care what you think' because the kids would pick this up. So you got involved, once you got involved, you were drawn in and that was it. You were gone!"

"PEP made us realise that schools are more than just teachers, administrators and kids. Our outlook has broadened. People are saying now that to make good decisions in schools we need to involve parents, the community and the kids more. That was never considered before. As soon as we started to actually do it - to bring parents and kids into the decision making process, we got nothing but positive feedback, and realised that this was the only way to go."

The second was the emphasis which was placed on teacher release as a means of promoting programme and school development. This was a highly effective strategy.

"Teachers are the kind of people who do a lot of work-related stuff in their own time. But PEP gave them the opportunity to do it properly, to do it with other people, and to do it not to the detriment of their health, their welfare, and their family, but to do it as professionals."

"What happened with PEP was that people were able to do things that they just couldn't have done in the past. Money used to be given for buying equipment, but all the planning and all the extra work that was involved, or the majority of it anyway, had to be done in your own time. But with PEP, we were encouraged to get teacher relief so you could go and do something or plan something that you or the school or the committee was interested in. That was probably the greatest thing about PEP: for the first time we actually had the time to do something, and it was a reasonable amount of time. We were able to research something out thoroughly - talk to people, visit other schools, even do library research. That was tremendous, we'd never been able to do that before."

Many teachers are now convinced that Participation and Equity will be seen as having had a real, a positive, and a lasting effect in schools.

"What has happened is that 'participation' has really been taken on board in schools. There has been a change of style, a change of intention. Even the language we use has a participative flavour now. There is a participative intention about the things we do. The really significant long-term benefit of PEP is the new level of participation of staff, students and parents in the school development process. Which means, really, involvement in everything that goes on in a school."

3. The Programme in schools

The comments of teachers, of school administrators, and of consultants to schools all indicate that the impact of the Participation and Equity Programme at school level was quite extraordinary:

"PEP really caught people's imagination. I saw a lot of people get a whole new burst of enthusiasm, sometimes way out of proportion to the small amount of money that might have been involved in a particular project. Something about PEP excited people. I'm still not quite sure what it was, but it was a kind of optimism, something to do with a feeling that we really might be able to make schools better places for kids to be in."

But what was the Programme, as far as schools were concerned?

When school staff talk about 'PEP' and what it encouraged or enabled them to do, they seem to be referring to one of four major aspects of the programme: the 'guidelines' (the Commonwealth's policy and priorities); the money (in the form of grants to schools); the 'SDO's' (School Development Consultants - the PEP field workers); and the Education Department's head office administrative staff (Secondary Schools Development Support Unit).

The Commonwealth Schools Commission made its policy clear in December 1983, when it released *'Participation and Equity in Australian Schools: The Goal of Full Secondary Education'*. This document listed the basic principles and objectives of the Programme; proposed eight major areas for action; and provided some operational guidelines for the 1984-86 triennium. It was widely circulated. Particular attention was given to the dynamics of change: the necessity of involving 'the whole school community', and the importance of developing shared objectives and priorities was stressed. Significantly, it was recognised that change may be neither be useful nor durable "if the reasons for change are not understood and endorsed by staff, students, and parents." There was a recommendation that programme coordinators could be appointed within (and from within) schools, and that programme funds could be used to enable their release from normal duties. One indication of the Commonwealth's essentially 'decentralist' intentions was the suggestion that about 75% of all available funds should be allocated to schools for school-based activity.

The signals were very clear: PEP funds were not to be used for 'top-down', imposed change strategies. Rather, schools and their communities were to be supported in their attempts to respond to their perceptions of their local needs. This was important: schools had not previously experienced this treatment from the centre - State or Commonwealth.

Direct funding was relatively modest: in 1986, 110 government secondary schools received only \$1.4 million in order to finance more than 500 discrete projects. In very few schools would total expenditure on Participation and Equity projects have exceeded 1.5% of staff salaries. When the opinions of staff in target schools are taken into account, it would seem that PEP was astonishingly cost-effective. (For example, the same expenditure would probably have had much less impact on the style and quality of education had it been used to fund a general salary increase!)

School Development Consultants (at first 'School Development Officers') were at the school/Programme interface. The position was highly innovative: unlike any previous consultants or advisers, SDO's went into schools with a 'whole school' brief. They were interested in whole school development, and had no particular commitment to one subject or one teaching department. In a very real sense, they represented the essentials of the Participation and Equity approach: *that change was not to be imposed, but to be facilitated*. The energy for change and the commitment to change were to come from the school and from its community. The consultant's concern was with the dynamics of the change process, and not with the particulars of the change product - they were for the school to determine. The consultant's contribution was to be expertise in process issues. Initially, this was not well understood; eventually, it was highly valued. (See section 6.3)

Locally, Participation and Equity was implemented by the Secondary Schools Development Support Unit. This head office team successfully translated Commonwealth policy and priorities into practice. The 'whole school' approach which the Commonwealth guidelines required was insisted upon, and procedures were developed which supported it, and which led to the sense of ownership of initiatives which is apparent in the comments of school staff. The success of the consultancy service offered to schools was not accidental: from the initial appointment of SDO's, the highest priority was given to developing a full understanding of programme objectives, and to maintaining shared values, shared priorities - a shared vision of the possibilities. In order to achieve this, two days of each month (i.e. 10% of working time) were committed to professional development. The relationship of the central administrative unit to schools was deliberately unobtrusive, as Programme guidelines required. Obviously, any effort to move schools towards self-determination would have been very effectively thwarted had it been otherwise.

If this state's experience with PEP in government schools is to be judged a success - as the comments of those involved in it would suggest - then credit needs to be given to the strategies selected and developed by the Secondary Schools Development Support Unit for the Programme's local implementation: it is possible that there are important lessons for 'Better Schools' in the success of Participation and Equity.

4. The alternative present: schools without PEP

There was complete agreement that Participation and Equity involvement had been of great advantage. When invited to consider what their school would now be like had it not been for PEP, all of those interviewed expressed the view that it would certainly be different, and that the differences would in fact be problems of some kind.

"Look, there's a very simple answer to that question. If we hadn't had PEP, this place would be quite different - quite different to what you can see now. It wouldn't be such a good place for kids, and it wouldn't be such a good place for teachers either."

Access to Commonwealth funding was generally thought to have been essential to the achievement of significant school improvement.

"Without Commonwealth money we couldn't have got our projects off the ground at all. We wouldn't have even got through the planning stage yet, because teaching really is a full time job, and you just don't have the hours in the day to do any more."

"There really has been a great movement, a great shift if you like, in education at our school, and I don't think it would have occurred at all without PEP. The fact that money was put up as well as ideas or suggestions about change, meant that people automatically said 'This time they mean business'. People take no notice of rhetoric any more - we've had too much of that. But when resources come with it, well, people respond."

Acknowledgment that PEP guidelines had been instrumental in shaping the educational strategies of the school was common. It is likely, for example, that if the Participation and Equity Programme had not stressed the value of community involvement and of the school based determination of priorities (or if local support for their inclusion in a school plan had not been provided) that neither activity would have been widespread.

"In the absence of PEP funding we certainly wouldn't have had the massive development you can see here. We wouldn't have had the Needs Survey for a start. You see, that was virtually one of the requirements for funding: you had to have a good introspective look at yourself. We went along with that. PEP funded two of our staff to coordinate the survey and the development of a school plan. Now we wouldn't have gone through this introspective process - which turned out, by the way, to be very worthwhile - and we wouldn't have made a lot of the changes that came out of the working parties and were written into our school plan, not without PEP."

"Without Commonwealth money and guidelines I think there would have been changes. We would still have set up committees and so on, but it would have been more of an in-house thing, with just staff involved. I don't think we would've moved to the stage of bringing in parents and community members, and I definitely don't think we would've got kids in."

In every school, it is appreciated that whatever the direction of school development, much less would have been possible without teacher release.

"The difference for us, I guess, would have been that without PEP we wouldn't have tackled so much, nor would we have achieved so much so quickly. With PEP support we've been able to release teachers from classrooms to work on important things, and we've been able to take kids away on camps that we could never otherwise have got the funding for. Both of these things have been crucial, quite crucial."

"Without PEP, we couldn't have tried as many things as we did, because teacher release has been the biggest bonus for our school. It's only been through freeing teachers that we've been able to get anywhere in many areas - such as student participation, for example."

"The Education Department has always taken teachers for granted. They assume the teacher will put in all the extra hours necessary to implement any new system they come up with. Unit curriculum is a prime example. But everyone needs some sort of pay back, even if it's only recognition. Now PEP gives teachers recognition, because they trust you with the time off. Teachers can do something useful with that time - they can shape up new programmes, get them running, and see that they're appreciated by the kids, that they're really worthwhile. Without PEP, there would have been none of that."

5. PEP and teachers

5.1 Professional commitment

Participation and Equity was extraordinarily well received in schools: many teachers became very enthusiastic about the programme, and seriously committed to its implementation in their school.

"There was a natural resistance to PEP initially. Teachers will look at any new programme and say, 'This is going to mean a greater demand on our time'. It's a natural reaction. When I went to the first PEP meeting, I thought 'Fantastic, but is it worth all the extra work?' Well, when we did get into it it certainly was worth it. There was extra work, but we did get time off. We ended up doing more work because you can't get all the time off that you really need."

'Time off' - the opportunity for teacher release which PEP offered - seems to have been particularly significant in developing this enthusiasm. It was seen by teachers as acknowledgment that they had something worthwhile to offer.

"I think that one of the reasons that staff are still enthusiastic about PEP is that they can see that their time and their input to these programmes are officially valued. It's like they're being told 'Look, we have enough confidence in your expertise and your professionalism to give you the time off to do this': it's recognition."

Another factor which is reported to have contributed to the positive attitude of teachers towards PEP was the emphasis which the programme placed on schools working out their own local priorities. Comments were frequently made about school-determined priorities being necessarily more appropriate than centrally-determined priorities, but the real issue is probably process related:

"It's natural for people to be keen about something they have a real interest in, something which they've decided should be high priority. When decisions about our school's priorities are made by someone in head office the decisions are likely to be wrong anyway, but apart from that, people up here are just not likely to feel the same way about imposed ideas, and the enthusiasm wouldn't be there."

Whatever the reason for the high degree of commitment to PEP objectives, as expressed in school-determined priorities, the result was a massive and an entirely voluntary investment of teacher time in PEP projects: an investment which must have been instrumental to the success of many of them.

"If you want efficiency for the dollar you couldn't have done anything better than PEP. The amount of time that's put in above and beyond the money is just unbelievable. If you want to justify the expenditure, then the process of debate that has gone on, the exchanging and refining of ideas, that alone is well worth the funds which have come into this school. Then if you costed the extra hours which people have put in over and above their normal load, you'd find the return on PEP expenditure would be fantastic."

In all schools, this investment brought results.

"I think that the kids have benefited a great deal from PEP as a result of the greater confidence and professional development of teachers. We certainly didn't do any before and after studies, which was a bit silly, but were so keen to try new things that we didn't put time aside for that. The kids benefited because from being a hopeless school in 1982, absolutely hopeless, where the morale was very low, the place was completely turned around. In the space of two years, the whole morale of the school changed. Staff were keen, confident, and there was a big difference in their commitment. The students benefited directly from that."

5.2 Awareness of professional issues

Inviting schools to consider how issues of participation and equity might best be addressed seems to have led directly to more active and more positive professional debate by school staff.

"I think that PEP has raised the level of professional debate amongst staff. The difference is that people now ask 'Why are we doing this?' or 'How does this help kids?' or 'Why don't we do such and such a thing?'. I think this is important..."

This was seen by some as perhaps the most significant effect of PEP in their schools: more important even than the outcomes of particular projects. It led to the discovery (or perhaps to the rediscovery) of common interests and of shared values, and to the consideration of a proactive approach to school reform.

"The fundamental difference PEP made is that in schools that have been through PEP, even if particular projects weren't all that successful, there came to be an amazing amount of educational thinking that was shared. The basic change was that in the staff rooms there was a lot of talk about which way the changes were going, whereas before it was just on what sort of day you were having. Everybody wanted something to happen after the Beazley Report, and when it took a long time coming, people became very skeptical. But those of us in PEP schools, I think, we decided that if the system wasn't going to respond, we'd do something anyway."

As the debate in schools progressed, fuelled by PEP, the concerns expressed by teachers became more student-centred, and less subject-centred. Given the programme guidelines and the emphasis on a whole school approach, this was to be expected.

"People used to be quite unaware of their own educational thinking. They knew their subject alright, but knew nothing about the development of people, the development of students. This programme ended a lot of that, and got them to think about their own educational theory, why they did what they did. The emphasis used to be on the content and not on the student, and I think that PEP's changed a lot of that."

The most common way in which teachers describe this change in the level and style of in-school educational debate is to speak in terms of an 'increased professionalism'.

"The main result of PEP, I think, is the increased professionalism of teachers.... the degree of professionalism increased right out of sight, because teachers were forced to think beyond their classroom and to take a 'macro-view', a whole school view. We had to see where what we were doing fitted with the school plan, the state system, even society in general."

For many teachers, taking this 'macro-view' was a professionally renewing experience which led to real insight and to real changes of attitude.

"I found it exciting to be 'stretched' in another direction, because although teaching my subject is interesting enough, in many cases the day to day work is a bit repetitive. PEP gave me an opportunity to try what could turn out to be fairly dramatic changes, to go in a different direction for a little while. I looked through the other end of the telescope for a change, and I saw everything broadening out..."

Not the least of these changes of attitude has been a growing professional confidence. As teachers have become more comfortable with the idea of discussing broader educational issues, many have become more aware of their own professional knowledge, their own professional skills, and their own professional power.

"What teachers have learned as a result of involvement in PEP is really very fundamental. It goes back to self-image. Teachers have learned that they are competent, and that they're capable of making a lot of things happen. I think also we've learned both to be more analytical, and to take a wider view. Certainly my own knowledge of educational theory and practice has grown inordinately. I think we have better teachers because of PEP."

5.3 Professional skills and inservicing

There is evidence that through Participation and Equity, teachers became professionally more skilled; more concerned to improve their skills; and more involved in determining the shape and the direction of teacher support within their schools. Criticism of centrally or regionally provided inservicing, and some resentment at being required to take part in it, were common in the five schools which were studied. Usually this seemed to be less a comment on the skills of those providing training workshops or seminars than an expression of dissatisfaction with the process by which inservice needs had been determined.

"The professional development we get through state funds is limited to something like: 'We are providing an in-service course for this or that, on such and such a date, whether you want it or not'. It's true that there's been a little more communication recently. People have rung around and said, 'Do you think it would be a good idea to run an in-service course on this or that?'. But it's still restricted to the framework of a particular theme that somebody else - not us - thinks necessary."

By contrast, when professional development is provided according to priorities established in the school (as was always the case with PEP funded inservicing), then the attitude of staff is usually very positive.

"The staff here is particularly good. We have a lot of keen professional people who give a lot of their own time. To keep doing this, they have to feel that it's worthwhile. Staff feel that it's stupid to go to an in-service course that tells them what they know anyway, or which doesn't answer the questions they're facing right now, and they get very frustrated with irrelevant in-service. By having staff-determined in-service courses, you avoid this problem."

In fact, when teachers in PEP target schools have experienced working on those areas of skill which they see as needing improvement, the general result has been not only the disappearance of any resentment over involvement in professional development, but an increase in the demand for it.

"The biggest change that's taken place because of PEP is in the professional development of teachers, to the point where they're actively seeking more of it. They're looking at their own competence, and they're looking to work on areas where they feel they need to know more. That's very healthy, I think, and it's a result of their having thought about the needs of the school."

Some PEP-funded, school-based professional development focussed on fundamental classroom management skills. The approach taken was not subject specific (the initiative did not come from subject advisers or consultants), but in accordance with PEP guidelines, was process-oriented. In all schools, this is reported to have been remarkably successful, and for many staff it was a new and professionally significant experience.

"The classroom management project was run here through PEP, and it was a real lifesaver for me. I had reached the stage where I was very negative: I dreaded going to the classroom, I shouted at the kids. All of a sudden this classroom management project appeared on the horizon and I thought it would be like everything else: pretty useless. But we got into it and it was superb. I'm a new teacher: it's like I've been reborn! I get on well with the kids, and from a personal point of view things are fantastic. The course reminded me that I still had worth, and that the things I'd enjoyed about teaching in the past were still there. This is all due to a very simple application of PEP funding. All we had to do was get some money to release us all from the school for a total of five days."

There was considerable 'incidental' professional development in schools which were targeted by the Participation and Equity Programme. The requirement to develop project broadly based submissions which were part of an overall school plan gave many teachers opportunities for involvement in aspects of educational planning and administration which would otherwise have been denied them.

"PEP was great. The learning that I got was simply immense. The learning of other staff and the extent to which the school developed was great. I learned about total school development, about school development planning: about the importance of the process. None of this was completely new, but it made my knowledge real - it reinforced my learning. Those years of working on school development planning, funded by PEP, have enabled me to really move on."

This involvement was seen by several teachers as allowing the development and the demonstration of a range of professional skills which the promotional positions within schools demand.

"I believe there used to be few opportunities, as an ordinary classroom teacher, to develop the skills that the department needed you to have for promotion. You were offered a promotion when you were next on the list: you couldn't show that you had any organisational capacity, because you'd never had the opportunity. The department must be laughing now, since they've had all this free staff development through PEP. Now they can put it to use to get 'Better Schools' off the ground. Apart from involvement in PEP, maybe as a project coordinator, how can ordinary teachers - not senior masters or deputies - how can they demonstrate their capacity to contribute to a whole school approach?"

Teachers in all schools commented on the dramatic change which relatively modest PEP funding brought about to the relevance and adequacy of inservice provision. Professional development moved from a marginal to a central position in school affairs.

"We're fortunate in having been a PEP target school. The support that was given to teachers by PEP funds to get away from school for a day or to run a course for ourselves has really been very good, very sustaining. Previously we had to wait for the occasional in-service course (which might not have been relevant anyway), often having to go for years without any real professional stimulation. Most of our money went on professional development, I suppose. The provision went from virtually nothing to pretty good - virtually overnight."

Additionally, there was some recognition that the teacher development establishment was not unaffected by the success of the process oriented style of school-based teacher support which PEP was promoting.

"In-service training used always to be from the expert view, top-down. I think that's changing because of programmes like PEP, where schools have been led to identify their needs - including their teacher development or teacher support needs. Advisers have begun questioning what they're doing. They used be running off work sheets and things because it seemed that the teacher had a problem with teaching addition. But really, the teacher didn't have a problem with teaching addition. The teacher was just sick of teaching, or couldn't control kids, or something. A different sort of problem really, much more common I think, and needing a different sort of response."

5.4 Politicisation and assertiveness

By its insistence on a 'whole school approach', PEP caused many teachers to be drawn into an activity which as planned, systematic, and overt behaviour, was new to many of them: persuading their colleagues of the worth of a particular idea (i.e. lobbying within the school).

"Another thing that I see coming from PEP is the 'politicisation' of teachers. You just had to come to terms with there being competing demands and competing opinions. Like you could have a brilliant idea yourself, and then be confronted by the half of the school saying 'no way'. Or you'd have a subject superintendent who would interfere with a school decision and just say 'No'. They could be a thorn in your side sometimes. Their vision was sometimes limited to their own subject, and we wanted to take a broader view. We had to do a lot of persuading."

With experience came skill, confidence, and assertiveness.

"One consequence of PEP, or rather of the planning process which PEP led us through, was that teachers began to feel a sort of self-determination, a being in control. Professional autonomy, I guess. They became much more assertive about what they wanted to do and what they thought was right. And we became better about taking it up, arguing the case with the powers that be."

One result of experience with the struggle of ideas within schools has been the emergence of a confident, robust, assertive style in negotiations with central administration.

"Staff realise they have power to affect decisions and they know that this means they have to share the responsibility for those decisions. They've learned how to lobby, how to put up ideas, how to follow through an action, how to take responsibility, and how to do reviews, implementation plans and evaluations. They've also got a hell of a lot of confidence. We all know now that we can stand up in front of the Director of Schools and tell him whatever we want - in fact we've done it. There's a confidence around now, and that allows people to be self-critical. We can admit our mistakes because we know that we're O.K., that we still measure up."

In all schools, it was understood that a genuine 'whole school approach' demanded that the widest possible views be represented at committee level. The importance which was attached to securing this wide representation, and the skill which was deployed in several schools to achieve it, are evidence of the sophistication of the politicisation process which accompanied Participation and Equity experience.

"I believe that the politicisation of teachers is essential. The process that was adopted at our school was a political process in the sense that it was designed to engage everyone right at the start - to get their commitment, their involvement. Because without that, you can't achieve anything worthwhile."

"We thought a lot about the people in the school who didn't want to be involved in working up a school plan. When it became clear that PEP involvement needed five or six groups or committees - one to look at each area of concern, we picked out people we thought might be interested, and we approached them. We got a list of names of people who'd like to head up different committees. Then we looked at the people we knew would be opposed, people whose staffroom talk was always against things. We said to them that we needed them on this or that committee because of their critical view. We said we needed a critical person on that committee. This got everybody involved, got everyone thinking."

The important role of the school development consultant in this politicisation of teachers was often stressed by teachers. It seems that SDC's were consistently modelling procedures which acknowledged the necessity of achieving consensus.

"We've learnt that if we organize ourselves and have clear agendas, set clear goals, and use the sort of planning procedures that we've seen the SDO's use, that we can keep moving, keep things in focus, so more people can share the vision. It's too easy to have only a few people holding the vision, knowing where things are going, while the rest don't know why or how well they're working. That's not good enough."

6. PEP and schools

6.1 School planning

Before PEP funds were released for specific projects, schools were required to develop a coherent school plan, and to show how the proposed projects fitted into this. Schools were induced - some more readily than others - to undertake comprehensive needs assessments, and to arrive at locally determined (and therefore locally appropriate) priorities. This was seen as an attractive notion.

"Basically, we want to solve the problems of our school, our way. That's where PEP has come in right on target. We've been able to work out a school plan and say 'This is how we think the available funds should be divided up'. Deciding priorities at school level is essential, otherwise a lot of resources are just wasted. You can't expect people who don't work in the school to really understand what the problems are, or what the strengths of the staff are."

The exact procedures by which priorities were determined varied between schools, but in general the response of teachers was similar: there was widespread staff interest in the process, which some school administrators were initially surprised to find.

"The first PEP thing that we did was a review of where the staff felt the school was at, and what its needs might be. We didn't include students at that stage - I was a bit anxious about that - and we didn't include parents. But from that we set up eight working parties. What happened was that when we got the information back, things like community participation came up, and staff development, and a number of major things like that - I think there were eight altogether. Now what really was incredible was that we put up notices saying 'This area of activity has come up as one in which people see a need for improvement: put your name down if you want to work on it'. We had about 80 on the staff at the time, and I think 56 people signed up. It bowled us all over, it was incredible! We had no idea that all that enthusiasm was there, available. And it was pretty well spread right through the school."

Through PEP we were able to fund planning time for each working party. What they did in this time was see if they needed more information than the survey, and if they did they had to work out how to get it, how to move on from there..."

In retrospect, the process of needs assessment is acknowledged by most school staff as having been useful for reasons other than its leading to PEP funding. It was more than a method of capitalising on the local experience of staff: it stimulated discussion; it invited action; it excited optimism.

"I think that part of the reason that we benefited from PEP was because we'd gone through the important process of identifying the needs of the school before we launched into anything. We took the PEP guidelines, with the seven areas for action that they talk about, and said to everyone: 'Are you interested in this? If so, what would you do? What do you think we should do, as a school?' It was a very open process... then we got out this questionnaire. The headings were: 'What is good about this school?'; 'What is not good about this school?'; and 'How can we improve it?' I was surprised the way staff replied to it: they responded so well. It was like they could see, here's a chance to change things, to do something about these issues.

6.2 Structural development

In some schools, the involvement of staff in identifying school needs and determining school priorities began with Participation and Equity: in others a movement in that direction was already under way, and PEP simply legitimised and accelerated the process. 'Self determining schools' have almost arrived, and in some of them, participative decision-making is a reality. This claim was made by one principal:

"Over the years that we've had PEP, we've democratised our decision-making as much as we can in the school. We've got committees that handle almost everything. There's a series of committees on educational issues in the school, and there are a lot of interested and very well-informed teachers. We operate the school on the basis of participative decision making, and people are given the opportunity to have their say."

Staff at the school share this view:

"I think our school is different, and a lot of this difference can be put down to PEP. The needs survey that was done way back really got people interested. Committees spawned other committees, and it just snowballed. While some have died, others have started up. The ethos now seems to be: we develop a committee; we talk; we generate ideas; we behave democratically. And it's very strong here."

The processes which Participation and Equity involvement have caused to become established in schools have resulted not only in important changes of ethos, behaviour, and expectation, but also in changes of an organisational or structural kind which will serve to sustain these.

"Most of the things we've set up are enduring structures, things that we've set up that I don't think you'll find anywhere else. For example, we've democratised the selection of Regulation 188 positions. This has generally been the principal's prerogative, but we have an election. We call for nominations from staff, have a secret ballot, and make recommendations for appointment. We've not had any conflict yet, perhaps because it's a system that came from the school structure working party, and that was approved by the whole staff."

These structural changes give every appearance of being or of becoming quite robust.

"I'd say that this school now has a very democratic decision making structure - it's a school of committees. I think it's a good thing, and it really is well established. The other day four of us made a decision and thought we could do that without consulting the staff, but we soon found out we couldn't. We were criticised not for the decision - just for the way it was made. Staff now expect to be involved in decision making. This has come about because there are a lot of committees here, most of which are loosely connected by one of the administration being involved. I think PEP can take the major responsibility for this."

The committee system is reported to be working well in those schools which are using it extensively, and the professionalism of staff is demonstrated in the quality of their committee work.

"In this school, there's only one way to get what you want and that's to get approval through whatever committee happens to control that particular school activity. We have a very professional and fair-minded staff who have the interests of the kids at heart, and either don't seem to come up with selfish schemes, or quickly recognises them in committee. The kids are the winners in this set-up."

In several schools, the change in management style has been quite dramatic, but because it has occurred gradually, many teachers have 'grown into' the new style, and the new power and responsibility which it offers them. Staff transferring from non-PEP schools, or staff returning after a break of service, see the change as striking, and tend to be more conscious of the associated advantages and disadvantages.

"When I went back to the school I was impressed with how different it felt to be a staff member compared to when I'd been there previously. There is a sense now that nothing important gets decided unless it's been discussed in a committee. It's a slow process, and sometimes the price you pay is a fairly high level of exhaustion and maybe frustration. But at least you don't have decisions just laid on you!"

Not all staff are persuaded that the new, participative decision making processes are worthwhile. There is some resentment over the time and the effort which is demanded.

"A few people find the democratisation hard to wear. There are some who don't want to be in it because it involves their time, and who resent the staff meeting once a month cutting into their own time. But the majority want to participate: and that's one of the good things about this school, that people have their say. It means that there's ownership of decisions. People feel they're not powerless, that they can influence what the school is doing. We can put this down to Commonwealth intervention, particularly via PEP. Because of the requirements for a needs survey and for us to do some school planning, a lot of the credit can go to the PEP guidelines."

6.3 Process awareness

A major feature of the implementation of PEP in local schools was the attention which schools were required to pay to 'process issues'. Administrative and support staff working in the Secondary Schools Development Support Unit understood that the changes in schools, if issues of Participation and Equity were to be seriously addressed, were going to be quite fundamental. The 'standard' practice of attempting to impose centrally determined priorities by issuing directives to schools - a practice which had never been entirely successful - was totally inconsistent with programme objectives. Instead, the approach taken was for head office staff to assume a responsibility for increasing the awareness in schools of PEP related issues, to support processes in schools which could lead to operational decisions based on that awareness, and to facilitate implementation of these decisions by securing access to available funds.

The funding submission procedure was very carefully designed, and in all schools the effects were profound.

"At first, we saw PEP simply as resources, and we got into it for what we could get out of it. But PEP turned us more towards process issues. We were being led through a process that we didn't perhaps understand at the time, but we certainly did once we saw that everyone had become involved in making decisions. I'm not saying that the decisions were any better being made this way, it was just that the process gave everyone some stake in what was going to happen. People became committed."

"As for the rigmarole we had to go through to write submissions, I now think that was an enlightened move on someone's part! We didn't like it at the time because we didn't know how to do it. We had to learn. And in the process of learning, we were thinking very hard about how we were going to change things, who we needed, whom we had to consult. We learnt to look at stages of implementation, and to consider school priorities, rather than just the priorities of a particular project. It's easy just to get money and then buy something with it. It's a lot harder to organize a group of people to work towards some long term solution. The good thing is that we've become better at writing submissions, and much better at getting people organised and together than we were in the past."

"Without having gone through the PEP process of determining school needs and working out a school plan, there would be a huge risk of this school falling into a hole, going back to old methods. The great benefit has been the process. We've seen the value of being able to sit down and work things out in a fairly thorough way, consulting people who are going to be involved in the changes or in putting ideas into practice. We should be able to keep that as the main priority for the school, and that's where the emphasis on our allocation of funds will be placed. If we hadn't experienced PEP, the allocation of funds for process issues would be quite different."

Teachers now commonly express the view that change - school development - requires attention to process issues, and many express this view with a conviction which suggests experiential rather than theoretical understanding.

"Each school has to decide its goals, aims, philosophy. To do that you need time. You need to get commitment from people, you need to evaluate what you're doing - this is a complex process, and it all takes time, time out of your personal and professional life. But there are no short cuts. You have to go through this process."

PEP field workers (School Development Consultants, formerly School Development Officers) were instrumental in achieving this level of insight into the essential dynamics of change and renewal. In every school, their influence was obvious and was highly regarded.

"I also think that the SDC had a big part to play in facilitating what was going on. He helped us to toss ideas around, and he'd ask what we wanted from him - did we want him to look at the problem, or did we want to do it ourselves and work out some ideas? Having someone like that who'll go ahead, organize things, get people in, throw ideas around - that facilitation was fantastic. We're one of the schools who know how to use their SDC because of our experience with a really good SDO. The relationship that was built up with the resource person was excellent."

6.4 Administration - new problems

The movement in PEP target schools towards a new management style, in which all teaching staff participate in strategic decision making, and which to some extent includes community or student representatives, can present real difficulties for principals. If committees are established and expect to have influence or to share power, then the role of the principal must change, and new problems can be anticipated. For example, how should the school administrators act when a committee decision is reached which they cannot support?

"In our system, school administrators are ultimately responsible, therefore they feel that decisions should be made by them. Many are frightened of sharing power. If you have committees that start to go a certain way, it can become very difficult for the principal to veto something because then a whole series of people can be antagonised, especially parents and kids. You can't control those people to the same degree as you can teachers, so you have to be very careful."

"I think it took a lot of time to convince some administrators that it was worth even trying to work through committees. What you say can go out to the students, the business community and the parents. Traditionally, many principals have never thought it necessary to establish the criteria on which they made their judgments, and their judgments have been more like pronouncements. Now, for the first time, they find they may have to justify, to give reasons."

School administrators have been successful in adapting constructively to an increasingly participative management style. It has required flexibility, it has involved some risk, but it has been achieved.

"I've had the opportunity of working long term in several schools, and I've seen the response of principals to PEP. They've developed, changed, and opened to new ideas and new possibilities. I think that flexibility - 'opening up' - that's where the challenge is to school administrators (deputies as well as principals) right now. They have to play a different role. They have to let go, open up, believe in and be prepared to trust the professionalism of their staff, the capabilities of their students and their parents. Basically, the hierarchy has to let go - and that's the hardest thing to do."

"I'm sure there have been schools which have found it difficult to use their PEP money because they didn't have administrative support. Our whole administration was all for PEP, initially because it meant an injection of resources, and they were interested in ensuring that it was done in the most creative possible way, even though it meant a lot of hard work."

"Our principal and deputies have made a big difference. In a sense, PEP went ahead really well at our school because the principal was prepared to let people stick their necks out. You had to push sometimes - sometimes you had to push hard, and really work out your case. The dynamics were perfect. PEP has had an effect on our school administration: they expect things now to come up from teacher level."

Principals describe their new role as one of sharing power, but are quite definite about the need to retain some kind of veto: at least for the present, they feel that they can be held accountable to the Ministry for school decisions but that teaching staff can not.

"The staff know that I'm the principal and that I have to make the final decision, but they also know that they'll have as much say - as much input - as possible. That's what PEP does for you, it teaches you to walk that rope. I grew as an administrator through PEP. I'm the one who has to live with the decisions, but I will implement whatever school plan we - as a staff - develop, as long as it's in line with Ministerial policy."

"I'm very happy to step aside while everybody is participating in decision making. I don't think I've ever made any change or reversed any decision which groups here have made; but I still maintain that it is my prerogative to make decisions, and that it is participative decision making, cooperative decision making if you like, that we are into. Until 'Better Schools' takes the responsibility away from the principal, I'm still responsible and therefore I believe I still have the right to veto. But the situation hasn't arisen yet. If we proceed all the way down the 'Better Schools' road, I can see some problems: principals might have all the responsibility but not all the power. And that's already the case here in a way: I'm certainly sharing the power, but I believe I still carry all the responsibility."

6.5 Staff - new connections

The school planning process promoted by PEP caused teachers from different departments in the school to work together, sometimes for the first time. Not only did a 'whole school approach' become possible - because planning was very much more broadly based than it had ever been before - but the experience of working across subject or department boundaries turned out to have a very positive, valued, and unifying effect: new networking, personally and professionally constructive, was established.

"PEP brought us out of the classroom. We started to think about being a school, whereas previously what was the point? You went to your classroom, did your bit within your department, and you never worried about the 'whole school' - that was left to administrators. Anyway, in most cases if you had ideas, that might involve a bit more work, you could guess that the administration would be antagonistic, and to attempt anything you'd be battering your head against a brick wall. That seems to have changed."

"A lot of teachers no longer only talk their subject. They talk school business across the school. Before PEP, a lot of teachers would say things like 'I've never been to the Manual Arts Department, I don't even know anyone who works there', or 'It's no good going down to the Science rooms.. it's right down the other end of the school... they've got their own staff room, and they won't want to know about this anyway'. A lot of teachers had never walked into other departments. They thought they had nothing to talk about."

"For the first time, I found myself sitting down with people from other departments, and we started to share things - I even went into other classrooms. We had different ways of doing things. Initially we talked about simple things like how to use text books appropriately - but it just blossomed at every step. The general level of interest in professional matters was shown in that the staff began arriving earlier, and leaving later."

Teachers certainly enjoyed the opportunity of working across the usual staff divisions. This may have been because most previous experience with 'unifying influences' in Western Australian schools would have been limited to an industrial rather than a professional context.

7. PEP and the community

The need for greater community involvement in school affairs is recognised by staff in the five schools which were studied: all schools have addressed the issue (in some it has had very high priority) and all have had positive experiences.

"I think that community perceptions of the school have changed. At least, I like to think so. People who have had a little involvement with the school become very supportive of it. Once they've a bit more understanding, they'll go out of their way to help us. Anyone who gets to know a teacher somehow becomes fairly supportive. I mean, you are working with their kids after all. PEP seems to reassure parents: it's almost like there's some hope for your kids in the system after all."

Community involvement in any but the most superficial sense is really quite new, and not surprisingly, there was some staff anxiety over the prospect.

"The fact is that as a school you have to encourage parent input into the programmes that you develop because of the PEP guidelines. So once we'd identified the problem at school level, we said, 'Let's ask the parents and see if they've got any ideas'. The result was that we had a great big think tank. Everything just came into place."

One highly experienced administrator, in a school which now has an enviable record of successful community involvement, admitted that initiative in this area of activity was originally undertaken only because PEP guidelines virtually required it.

"We came up against some initial staff resistance to community participation. Everyone had a fear that we'd get a group of difficult people who would try to take over the place, trying to control and influence curriculum. Well, we did have one or two difficult parents, but they either didn't last very long, or they themselves changed under the influence of the good, very strong people on the staff. It was great to see how the parents and community thought about things: they had different ideas. There was quite a bit of exchange. I think both teachers and parents changed a little."

Despite this early reluctance, there has been useful progress: personnel in all schools feel that there have been real changes in the community-school relationship, and that moves to more extensive community participation will be easier as a consequence.

"Our strong community involvement in PEP is leading up to the sort of community participation which is coming in our schools, with their new structure - a community council and so on. People are more aware now of what's going on and so they're not afraid to be involved in the school, in fact they like the idea. A lot of people used to look at school as something unapproachable - almost sacred. They thought the principal and staff knew everything and weren't interested in their opinion. But our projects have really opened the place right up. People come into the school now."

8. PEP and students: the direct benefits

Participation and Equity has quite clearly been of direct benefit to many teachers; has contributed a great deal to school development; and has modelled many of the processes and practices to which the Ministry is committed. While students will eventually benefit from better schools, what effects can be seen now?

Although no 'hard' evidence seems to have been collected, teachers feel that students have responded well to the various initiatives which have been funded through PEP. They are certain that 'student attitudes have improved'. This is a more significant claim than it might seem because it is expressed in a kind of professional shorthand. It is really an assertion that interpersonal relationships within the school generally, and of students to teachers particularly, are perceived by teachers to be qualitatively different, and that this difference is seen as facilitating the learning and the teaching processes.

"You ask yourself at the end of these programmes - which are obviously all intended to benefit kids - you wonder if they have really made a difference. I guess there are a number of ways of looking at that. One I suppose is scores on some kind of performance test. I'm not sure that we've ever been able to answer well in that way. But I'm quite certain that we could demonstrate that the attitude of students has changed in a really positive way. I believe that has to happen first, and I believe that it's more important in the long run than improved scores on some test."

All schools explicitly addressed the issue of classroom relationships as part of their Participation and Equity involvement, and all claim that students have benefited as a result.

"PEP enabled us to change the face of teacher-student relationships through support to our MSB (Managing Student Behaviour) programme, which was supremely successful. Before that we had a lot of teachers who hadn't resolved the power thing in their classrooms. Had it not been for the turn around, I don't think student participation would be at the level it is now. Change was in the air. The kids were just as excited as we were, because they could see an increasing consistency in relationships and rules in classrooms, and they had some say in the rules that were set."

In addition to considering how existing courses might better be taught, schools were very active in considering content. Students are thought to have benefited from the support given to the development of new courses and new course materials designed by school staff to meet student needs.

"I interpret 'Participation' as a full secondary education: into year 12 or at least year 11, and we're certainly making progress. A number of the courses that we wrote here and the support materials for senior general science, geology, computing, business, and electronics were definitely aimed at attracting students into Year 11. A lot of the work was supported by PEP of course, from submissions that we made. Whether we'd have been able to get the same quality as we did, without that support I'm not sure. But they are quality courses and quality material, and this has been perceived by the kids. They've selected the courses, and our numbers have increased. Participation is up."

"One of the long term benefits of PEP will be the changes in a lot of our courses here. PEP provided staff time to document courses and to make up support material. We've developed a geology course for example, and we've done a lot in computing - we have support material for a parent computing course. A lot of that work is continuing in the school and will endure. We've produced electronics courses, support material for health education, business studies, art ... it just goes on and on. These are long term measures that will benefit students for some years on."

"Another way that PEP has helped to revolutionise the school is that we've started a life skills programme. We were able to pay a consultant to do a community survey, and one of the things which came through was strong support for work experience programmes and for life skills programmes. The GO and the Youth Education Officer have been able to write a curriculum specially related to the needs of this school, focussing in year nine on building up students self-esteem; and in year ten focussing on career skills and job seeking skills. No courses like that were ever developed in the school before: they were all centralised, and not necessarily right for our kids. What we offer now is exactly right, and you could say it's a direct PEP benefit to students."

In several schools there has been major progress towards a more appropriate involvement of students in decision making processes.

"One thing I've been very happy with is the level of student participation which we've been able to achieve. I think we lead in that field. We moved into it gradually by getting a couple of kids on the pastoral care and discipline committees. At first we left contentious issues till the end of the meeting and asked students to leave, but a confidence gradually developed, and we stopped that. I thought teachers would be against kids making decisions, but the pastoral care and discipline body has two Year 12 and two Year 10 people, and they have equal say with the staff. I'm pleased that the kids are not afraid to speak out, but I think you can only develop that by leadership training, which we always thought was desirable, but which we couldn't fund until PEP came on the scene."

"Kids have benefited because people are now thinking of asking them about the school. We don't know how to go about it very well, but there's now quite a serious intention to talk to students about education and to get them to participate in some of the planning. It doesn't work very well yet, because we still posture with old models and the students themselves have their model they work from, but every now and then there are connections, and that is pretty considerable progress."

9. System level benefits: PEP and 'Better Schools'

Credit is usually given to the Commonwealth for having first exposed schools to notions of 'devolution'. Justly or not, the State is often seen as having been a somewhat reluctant late convert.

"The ideological stance of the Commonwealth was totally different. It was about decentralisation as opposed to centralisation, and Western Australia is particularly centralised. That was the key. It was about giving schools some power, and inviting teachers to consider where their efforts ought be directed and how available resources should be deployed. This isn't unique to Australia: it's part of a world trend. But the Commonwealth had to really push this idea onto the states, through programmes like PEP."

"All of these Commonwealth programmes have been a liberating force. Nothing, absolutely nothing, would have happened in our department - I'm adamant about this - had not the Commonwealth burst open the doors and demanded change. That's virtually what they did! Now, in 'Better Schools', the state is coming in 8 or 10 years later with something that really has its roots way back in Commonwealth initiatives. Because we have the experience of that, we're ready for anything now. 'Better Schools' - we can handle that."

Teachers in PEP target schools are confident in their view that the structural and operational reforms which are under way in this state will be carried through. They are supportive of the changes, and feel that with their Participation and Equity experience they will be able to contribute to debate and to development.

"There's a lot of talk about the devolution of responsibility to schools. I think that this really will happen eventually, and the people in Head Office who've had strong power positions just won't be there any more. I think PEP has made schools ready for this type of devolution. I certainly know that other schools, without this experience, will be much less ready! I noticed at a senior staff conference last year how people were so incredibly hostile to anything new."

It annoyed me that they couldn't see the way things are going. But there'll be a lot of teachers from the target schools that will filter through to the other schools, and that will improve things: they have higher expectations, and more confidence in their own ability to adapt and to innovate."

A widespread view, often powerfully asserted, is that those schools which have been through some of the processes which PEP involvement has required are ready for change, and that those which have not been through them are not.

"I think the State government should be very thankful for the Commonwealth programmes, because they've made the implementation of some of the present changes so much easier. We've already looked at many of the issues in school management and organization, and we've got answers to many of the problems that are going to come up. Our PEP experience has given us the confidence to cope with anything the Ministry can throw at us."

"There's some confusion, and not a really high feeling in education at the moment. I think that some of the changes are going to be really exciting, but I can relate to people in schools feeling that right now it's all just a bit too much. Schools that have never had PEP money are in a dreadful position because they've never had that liberating experience. You go to those schools and it's like... well, they just have no idea of what can be done."

Unit curriculum was often used as an illustration of how the response of a school to imposed change is likely to be a function of its experience with Participation and Equity.

"I don't know how our staff would have received unit curriculum without PEP experience. You see, now, after PEP, the structures are here; the ability to communicate is here; the open forums for discussion; everything is ready. The feeling was that the staff should decide, and it was done very democratically. It was put to the vote. It was real voting, too - not just a gesture."

"I really think a lot of our schools were ahead of what the system kept putting out in the new changes. If you look now at which schools have made changes in unit curriculum, you'll find the PEP schools are the ones that are really trying to make the changes, and maybe suffering the consequences. The traditional non-PEP schools still operate on the premise that the system will keep going the way it has done, that even if they put these little changes in, everything will really stay much as it has been. Not everyone wants change."

Greater local control over school expenditure is one aspect of the present devolution process which is keenly anticipated, and has been well-modelled by Participation and Equity. PEP schools have seen that it is essential if self-determining schools are to be a reality: they will welcome it, and they now have the structures and the experience to deal with it.

"If you let someone from head office decide how much you should spend on one thing or another, nothing that we need would ever get off the ground. You have to have school level decision making about spending if you're going to do things that are for your school, that your kids are going to benefit from and that your teachers are going to get enthusiastic about. PEP has been a good model of that."

"None of the things I've talked about could have happened without Commonwealth funding, because although the money might have been there at the state level, the state government had its own priorities, which it would force on you. It doesn't work to have some expert sitting in Perth, with you thousands of kilometres away, being tied to his decisions about how he would spend the money if he were here. That was the essential difference: PEP let us spend where we thought the spending was needed."

10. Problems

10.1 Loss of key personnel

Staff mobility (or anxiety about staff mobility) was reported to have been a problem in all of the schools. Despite the committee structures which are in place and which should go some way towards sustaining PEP initiatives, and despite the complex processes of consultation and consensus-seeking which have resulted in real and broadly-based support for change, it seems inevitable that certain staff members will be seen as essential to project success or even to project continuance.

It was commonly suggested that 'key' staff members ought not be subject to what are seen as fairly arbitrary transfer procedures: that exceptions ought be made for people who are important to an initiative which the school considers to be a high priority or high profile activity.

"The only problems in setting up schools to be fairly innovative is that we're bogged down by rules of staffing. For example, if you have a staff member in school who's doing a lot of good work - they're not indispensable, but they're key personnel - they get transferred out according to the ordinary staffing process. Hopefully this will happen less when principals get more say in their staffing."

Similarly, there was concern that staff being transferred into a school were not being selected because of their interest in, or sympathy for, any of the innovative programmes with which they were soon to be confronted.

"The staff who were around at the time of our big PEP push are going. It'll be interesting to see if there's a depression as a result of that. We don't know, of course, whether the new people are going to be interested in keeping things going. We just have no idea who we're going to get."

Despite these concerns, PEP initiatives seem to have not only to have survived, but to have succeeded. Key roles have been filled as required, but certainly not as a result of intelligent or sensitive staffing practice.

"We kept losing key personnel all the way through. Fortunately, we mostly seemed able to find someone to take over from where another person left off, which was really good."

Of course, not every loss of a key person has been through involuntary transfer, and there was some recognition of this.

"The key people are going. I've come to terms with it. I've seen it happen over and over again. It doesn't depress me anymore: I just see it as part of a cycle in the social dynamics of the school, but I do get a bit nostalgic. The interesting thing is, I think it's precisely because those people were involved in the programme that they're going. They've grown out of sight - their horizons are beyond just this school. They want to move on."

10.2 Lack of recognition

Some concern was expressed in most schools that major contributions to the success of particular projects were not being appropriately recognised.

"People should have had some acknowledgement for their efforts. Maybe in the end it all boils down to an ego thing... but people aren't getting enough credit or recognition for what they're offering to the system through PEP. I would argue that what they're offering is something substantially different, and substantially important. But when you don't get recognition, I guess the inference is that what you've done doesn't matter - that it isn't important. In situations where you don't get acknowledgement, these are the sorts of inferences that are drawn, and they're very destructive of initiative and commitment."

There was no clear agreement about what form 'recognition' might take, but some form of publicity seemed favoured. This was seen as leading to useful documentation of school progress, as well as providing an acceptable means of acknowledging individual effort.

"One thing that has worried me is that in successful schools it would be nice to have a way of reminding the staff of how much progress they have made - how far ahead they are. It worries me that people can be too close to the whole thing, and all they can see is that everything's not being done perfectly. I think that here, a lot of staff have lost track of the distance we've come. I suppose that schools themselves ought to be responsible for publishing their own successes, but that's never been the pattern in this state. I feel sad when I see people who've worked very hard in the past five years reaching the stage where they think, 'What have we really achieved?'. They've forgotten what it felt like before: whereas for me, coming back to the school after a break, well, I could see that it was a very different school indeed."

Western Australian schools have not previously been responsible for publishing details of their educational or professional achievement. This might account for their failure to realise that recognition for work in school-based projects might also need to be school-based.

Several field workers reported frustration in their efforts to have schools produce any written review of progress or record of success. A commonly held view in schools is that any documentation is a bureaucratic imposition, and interference in the real business of teaching, and only likely to be used against the school anyway...

"A major difficulty for me, as an SDO, was getting schools to review, or to document their PEP projects. The use of documentation is so that they could really see where they were coming from, where they were going, and how much they had achieved. (I was very much aware of people forgetting where they'd come from very quickly). The schools were very worried about 'documentation' being evaluation. On the one hand they kept asking for it, but on the other hand they didn't want it. They kept thinking, 'When is someone going to come along and tell us whether we've got it right or not? Will this affect how much funding we'll have next year?'."

10.3 Administrative difficulties

Administrators in the five target schools are credited by their staff with having actively promoted (or at least having permitted) the establishment of the procedures and the structures which result in participative decision making. In consequence, they have had to adjust their role within the school, and they appear to have done this successfully. 'Democratisation' has sometimes meant that principals have had to take risks: they have been asked to authorise action about which they have had some reservation. No staff member reported having felt in any way blocked or unsupported by the school administration, although several noted that administrative skepticism, although surmountable, remained healthy!

"Lack of administrative support is always the main problem with anything new, and it could have been a problem for PEP. If you don't have that support - if there isn't the kind of vision for example, that allows the appointment of someone to non-classroom responsibilities to do things that don't seem to be instantly tangible, then you're very limited. It took a while for our principal to come around. I think that for a time he thought that we were definitely part of the lunatic fringe. He used to constantly say that our ideas wouldn't work, but he was prepared to let us try, so that was fine. When he saw we were worth support, we got it."

The relationship with Departmental administration was less comfortable. In general, the feeling was that head office was out of touch with developments in schools. Worse, there was an unwillingness on the part of some head office staff to accept that schools might actually have something worthwhile to contribute to professional debate.

"I'm sure that a part of the system didn't like what PEP schools were doing. There wasn't real overt opposition, but they were just not taken notice of. For example, when Personal and Vocational Education was being developed in Head Office, some of our schools already had GO's making courses, working with teachers, getting funds, putting a lot of time in. These people weren't consulted. In schools we weren't asked what we were doing. The head office people didn't recognize that they were behind a lot of the schools, and that when they put out these edicts to the schools, the schools thought they were crazy, because they'd already been there and done that!"

School staff were unable to identify any problems relating to PEP administration (through the Secondary Schools Development Support Unit). Submission procedures for school-based project funding were considered to be not unreasonable, and were processed efficiently.

"There were no real administrative problems with PEP, not once you accept that nobody is going to give you money for nothing unless you tell them what you're going to do with it! I don't think the submission process was particularly onerous - it was quite obviously intended to be a lot less work than in some other schemes."

The contribution of PEP field workers to the smooth running of the system was appreciated by school staff - who in most cases would have been unaware of the extent of professional commitment, carefully planned professional development, and systematic professional support which went into making that contribution not only possible, but highly effective.

"I don't know how qualified I am to comment on administrative difficulties - I'm not conscious of there having been any. Of course, the SDO's role has been vital: very helpful. My perception is that potential bureaucratic difficulties have been avoided because of the SDO being a very effective liaison person. Someone who has the power to sort out problems, and who also understands more fully than we do what is happening outside the school... in the Department."

"Another thing that's been good about PEP is the attitude of their personnel. Everyone who advised us made us feel very at ease in what we were doing. At no time did we feel threatened by anybody. We never got the impression that they were checking on us to see that we were spending the money in the right way. The PEP people always worked in a facilitating role, and we've never been made to feel that we had to justify what we were doing. Occasionally, a suggestion may have been a criticism, but it was always put in a supportive way."

"Some of the good things about PEP were the way the programme was run, it was spot on. The school development consultancy approach was a good move. You worked cooperatively with the SDO all the way through the planning and submission process. You got help, and you got reassurance. The way it was run was the best thing about PEP."

10.4 'Teacher Burnout'

The most commonly reported problem associated with Participation and Equity in schools is simply overwork. Paradoxically, it is PEP's tapping the professionalism, the enthusiasm, and the optimism of teachers which produces this.

"There seems to be an idea here that if there's anything we want to get done - anything - we can do it. We have the skills, so why not? But what you can end up with is people who are really burnt out. They spend a lot of time on committees, they do a lot of thinking, there's a lot happening and a lot of people involved. And responsibility often rests with people who've got a full teaching load."

"One thing that might have occurred over the last couple of years, is people running out of energy. Even with all the PEP funds in the world, there are only a limited number of hours in the day that people are willing - or able - to give up. Energy levels naturally wane with time: it can be really difficult to maintain staff commitment and motivation."

The nature of classroom responsibilities is such that they can not easily be given anything other than first priority. In fact, the focus of PEP on improving the general quality of education forces teachers to become more aware of the quality of their own work in the classroom, and more determined not to allow any deterioration in it.

"The debate here is always 'How are we going to get the time to do this? This needs to be done, and it's got to be done well. How am I going to manage? I've got to take all these classes. How can I do my job properly?' It becomes a bit political. Why should we bust our gut just because the Department is trying to get more and more out of the good will of people. That just makes people supertired: we've still got our classes to worry about. I can see people getting distressed because they aren't doing a good job either in their classroom or in the project because they simply haven't the time to do both properly. The danger is that overloaded people turn off."

Committee work, essential to a 'whole school approach', is an additional load for most teachers, and even those who are most committed to it can find themselves having to admit that they are unable to meet the demands on their time.

"PEP represents a different way of operating, and for some people this is frustrating because decisions aren't made instantly - they are discussed, and that takes time. That's been one problem area - the time commitment which is involved in the decision making process that we've learned as a school through PEP has really told on some people. Those who've been heavily involved in the committee structure for 3 years or so have reached the stage where they can't face up to the energy level and the time commitment needed for more than one committee. I think the only way to solve this problem would be to increase staffing in schools so more people have a reduced teaching load. But that's the least likely thing to happen in the near future."

There is no easy answer to this problem. It seems clear that if management procedures necessary for better schools require teacher time, then this time must be allowed for on some systematic basis, or there will be entirely predictable and entirely unacceptable consequences.

"Any education system which relies on voluntarism will in the end turn people off, just dry them out. I'm now looking outside for a job, because I just feel overutilized - I know this is partly my own fault - and I feel insufficiently rewarded. I don't know how common this is, but I know it's happening to me. I'm not saying in my case that PEP caused or even contributed to this, but I know that it can."

10.5 Teacher relief

Teacher release, for the additional responsibilities which have been assumed as part of a school's PEP involvement, would seem to be a solution to the problem of teacher overload. While administratively this may be acceptable, there are professional objections.

"One of the problems with relief is people losing their contact: they feel like they're losing power with the students, like it's somehow an infringement on their autonomy. People don't like that, and they're prepared to pay the price of overload to avoid it. A lot of people get so deeply involved that they can't see that they're doing this."

"My point of view is that the biggest problem is that you have to leave your classes. You lose your contact with that class particularly if you have a reasonable amount of time out. The kids resent it. Once it happens more than a couple of times, the kids don't like the relief teachers. They can't understand what's going on - they just know they're not getting the attention that they used to get. Then different relief people have different attitudes to work standards and behaviour, so you have to reestablish those each time you go back. I used to think that one day a week out on a regular basis might be okay, but then again I've also thought maybe it'd be better to get it over in one hit."

Many teachers felt so strongly about the undesirability of relief teaching that they refused it.

"When we were involved in PEP committees out of time, there was some money available for staff relief, but we chose not to take it more often than not because it's not good for the kids, and it's not all that good for you anyway because you still have to prepare the work and mark it."

In only one school was the claim made that teacher release was generally acceptable to staff. This may have been due to careful management of an atypical pool of relief teachers.

"Some teachers think that kids will suffer from teacher release, but we have a core of reliable and good relief teachers, and we always get the same relief teacher to take over from a particular classroom teacher. That's important it means that there's some real teaching going on, and it's not just a baby sitting exercise. Admittedly, this hasn't always been possible, but we've got close enough for there not be any resistance to occur."

It is possible that it not so much teacher release *per se* to which many teachers object, but the system by which it is organised. There were several suggestions for change:

"Teacher relief in term blocks, instead of occasionally, would be totally acceptable. You'd then have the time to really achieve something. It's the method of teacher relief that's unacceptable, not the idea."

"We've had to bring in relief teachers. They're never as good as the regular classroom teachers and there have often been problems with that. Some teachers have refused to go on the PEP committees because they have year 12 classes. I think that the Department should employ some relief teachers on a permanent basis to go out to the schools. Then we'd get better relief teachers and the problem would disappear."

11. The future: can change be sustained?

Everyone was asked to describe how they imagined their school might manage without continuing support from the Participation and Equity Programme. The range of opinion on this point was extraordinarily wide.

Several teachers suggested that there would be little immediate change - that the main achievement of PEP had been to break old attitudes, and to open schools to the possibility of change and development. This had been done.

"In terms of our current projects, the termination of PEP isn't going to make much immediate difference because there's so much change actually in progress at the moment. There are many things to think about at the moment, things which need quite a bit of work to finish off. We need to maintain our whole school approach, and we should be able to do this for some time."

"In a way I wonder whether PEP at our school hasn't run its course. Its major achievement has been changing teachers' ideas. If we attempted to innovate indefinitely it would wear teachers out. I think that maybe it's time to sit back and consolidate; to work on what has already happened; to refine systems; to improve what we're doing rather than to change it. Perhaps even to evaluate the results."

More often, however, there was less confidence about the survival of some of the major achievements of the Programme.

"I'm afraid that the system won't have been permanently changed by PEP. I always thought in the long term that there would've been changes as a result of the Karmel report, and there was a brief innovative period, but people soon go back to their old ways. To be effective a programme has to be actively sustained - it can't be a one off effort. For a start, you have staff changeover, and get tired, have too much on their plate, and lose the energy to fight for what they believe in. That's why once PEP funding goes, the effects of PEP will gradually lessen. In the short term, it has helped get some good things done, and it's helped alter people's ways of thinking. But you have to keep fuelling the fire."

QZ04

"I don't think people will be able to sustain the energy level needed to restructure schools, or to take time out to make decisions and to work through things, unless you have that money available."

"Another thing with PEP is that when you do get a major change, you've got to keep on hammering it year after year after year. I think we're just learning that. You can't just set up pretty structures and forget about them. Fortunately we have a staff that will try to keep things going because they see the benefit.

"When the Commonwealth withdraws, you might think that things will remain static, that what's been achieved will continue. But I just don't think that happens: unless you evolve you go under. To evolve you have to have more time; have to constantly reassess what you're doing; have to decide your priorities and check them with every new group of kids, teachers, and parents. I think things may maintain themselves for one or two years, but after that it'll be back to a survival situation because people simply won't have the time to address some very vital issues."

One specific concern is the loss of teacher release: even though most teachers were equivocal about relief teaching, it was recognised that without it, school development work will be slowed down.

QPB03

"You tend to get a few people who carry more of the load than they should. Sometimes they get tired, and because they're too much bound up in it it's very difficult for someone else to take over. That's what may happen when PEP funds are withdrawn. Some people have had time off to set up and organise things - what's going to happen now? Who's going to replace them? How are we going to get people as committed to the process as they were? We won't be able to give them the time they need. It's going to be very difficult."

Loss of the school-based inservice work which PEP has funded is viewed with a great deal of anxiety: which of course, is a comment on its success.

"The money that's come our way in the past has very well covered our needs and has been put to good use. If we lose it, we'll certainly feel the pinch: it will be a backward step. The professional development of staff will suffer, and if staff morale drops, it tells on the kids. In fact, if you've got staff with a low morale you might as well close shop and go home. You'll be doing more harm than good."

"Without PEP we won't be able to run regular teacher effectiveness courses. How long are the effects going to last when there's no ongoing development? I don't know - I really don't know. Schools are notoriously unstable environments because of staff movements. We've been able to provide some continuity through inservicing, but if the money is withdrawn, and we lose that, then we could be in trouble. If we head back to where we were only a few years ago, we'll have a general low morale, ratty kids, more and more suspensions, general lack of success. That would be dreadful."

There is no expectation in schools of the Ministry providing replacement funds for those which will be lost with the demise of Participation and Equity, and there is some concern that the priorities of the State are such that even if resources were available, they would not be used to support some of the initiatives which schools value.

"When the Commonwealth disengages from the state education system I think there'll be a little bit of chaos. You'll find a lot of good school based projects will vanish. I can't see the State government picking them up. They're now into devolving responsibility to schools, making them self-determined. That'll put everything else on the back burner."

"If Commonwealth money goes, I don't think our system will be able to experiment as much, because the way the State Government has to allocate money for education is far more politically sensitive than the way the Federal Government can allocate funding. So the kind of projects we've been running would certainly be very difficult to fund, and there's a very real limit to what you can do without money. I suppose the system will revert to just running schools, providing staffing, painting the buildings and so on. And we'd just get back to our basic job - not concerning ourselves with issues outside our classroom."

"When all the funds PEP disappear, if we're not careful the State won't pick up that sort of funding and won't push on with the 'freeing up' process that was largely PEP-driven. If that comes about, then we're going to end up right back where we started. Yes, I really think we could go way back to 1972, and that's because I'm not sure that the State system has bought the Commonwealth's ideology. It's true that 'Better Schools' is about the decentralisation and devolution of power which was inherent in Commonwealth programmes. What concerns me is that the motives seem very different: they are more economic and political. The Commonwealth's programmes had a very clear and definite educational reason for being."

12. Conclusion

There can be no doubt that in the five schools which were discussed by contributors to this report, the Participation and Equity Programme was a highly successful vehicle for teacher renewal and for school improvement.

The extracts from interview transcripts which have been used in this document bear witness to the impact of PEP on many teachers, both professionally and personally. Recollecting their PEP experience, they describe it as having been 'exciting', 'stimulating', 'liberating', 'rewarding': even though PEP invariably meant extra work, extra problems, and extra pressure. The consequences have been increased commitment to the profession; greater awareness of professional issues; a real concern for improving professional skills; and renewed professional optimism, confidence and assertiveness.

At the same time, PEP moved schools towards 'self determination': educational needs and priorities were determined at school level, and comprehensive school plans were developed; decision-making processes were reviewed to become more participative, taking formal account of the professional competence and commitment of the whole staff; real effort and real progress towards significant community and student involvement in school affairs was made. In many ways, PEP prepared schools for some of the challenges which the new Ministry was to present.

These are very considerable achievements, but success cannot be replicated unless it is understood. What next needs to be done, in order that the system might benefit fully from the PEP

experience, is to consider not *what* was achieved, but *how* it was achieved. There is a need to understand why Participation and Equity worked so well. How did it excite the idealism and optimism of teachers? How did it lead school administrators to risk a redefinition of their role? How did it cause new structures and new processes to become accepted in schools?

As the Ministry moves further towards its goal of 'Better Schools', the insights, the skills, and the strategies which were developed in schools, in the consultancy service, and in the administrative unit which managed Participation and Equity will become of critical relevance. If the State's present intentions are to be implemented at least as successfully as the Commonwealth's recent agenda of reform, then these insights, skills, and strategies need to be examined, need to be understood, and most importantly, need to be used.

Appendix 1
Technical Notes

Appendix 1: Technical Notes

1. General information

This project was commissioned by the Executive Officer of the State Advisory Committee, Participation and Equity Programme, following an expression of interest in the production of a descriptive report which would summarise selected *successful* PEP experience.

The purpose was to indicate what could be accomplished in terms of school development by dedicated staff working within the programme guidelines, having access to moderate project funding, and being supported by skilled field workers ('School Development Consultants'). Specifically, the report was expected to deal with perceptions of the long term benefits which the programme has brought about; with the professional and administrative challenges which it has presented; and with the possible consequences of its termination. This would involve the marshalling not of fact, but of opinion: the first steps were to determine whose opinion should be taken into account, and how this opinion should be collected and presented.

It was decided that all of those to be interviewed (ie, the 'contributors' to the report) should have had significant involvement with the Participation and Equity Programme in a school context, either as a project coordinator or as a project manager, as a consultant to schools in which significant and successful PEP activity had taken place, or as a teacher or administrator in such a school. Further, their involvement should have been instrumental in the attainment of Programme objectives. Opinion was to be collected by interview (this places minimal demands on school staff), and was to be presented in a descriptive or '*illuminative evaluation*' style. What is produced in this way is an evaluation of the Programme *by contributors to the report*, rather than by the 'author' of the report.

This procedure does not claim to present a representative view of PEP in Western Australian government secondary schools, nor does it attempt to be in any way quantitative: policy decisions should not be made on the assumption that the experiences and views recorded are statistically valid. What can be expected however, is that the procedure will identify issues with clarity sufficient to permit informed discussion and to allow the development of a short, precise survey instrument to confirm any significant or controversial findings.

2. Evaluation, value judgment, and policy determination

It is often considered important to separate the functions of evaluation and policy determination (thereby separating the roles of evaluator and decision maker). For example:

"The responsibility for making a judgment about a program's worth resides in the decision maker; the evaluator's task is to provide the decision maker with sufficient information for arriving at a decision."

(Talmage 1982, p595)

According to this view, the evaluator should neither render judgment, nor become involved in the politics of decision-making, but should focus only on the provision of evidence relevant to policy. This reduces the task of the evaluator to that of determining what comprises evidence, and how that evidence should be collected and presented. It also avoids the criticism that because a contracted evaluator is not normally privy to the competing social and political demands upon resources, value judgments must be arrived at in a context which at best only approximates that in which the administrator operates. Cronbach therefore warns:

"It is not the task of the evaluator to determine whether a program is worthwhile, or what decision is 'right'. The evaluator cannot properly judge what conclusion is sound for someone else."

(Cronbach 1978, p14)

Despite this, it is consistently argued that the usefulness of an evaluation report to administrators is increased if a judgment of the worth of a programme is included. Talmage (1982) cites the opinions of Scriven and of many others favouring this position, and it is the experience of many social programme evaluators that commissioning authorities demand that value judgment be included, usually in the form of recommendations. Scriven (in Parlett and Hamilton, 1978) explains the advantage to clients in pressuring evaluators to render judgment rather than simply to provide evidence: if the judgment is politically appropriate, the evaluation can be used to legitimise policy; if not, it can simply be ignored.

It was considered that given the purpose of this report, and given that only successful PEP experience was accessed, explicit recommendations would be inappropriate.

3. Contributors to the report

A panel of School Development Consultants (nominated by the Executive Officer, State Advisory Committee) selected 25 potential contributors, of whom it proved possible to contact 22. These individuals had continuing experience of PEP implementation in five government secondary schools - three metropolitan senior high schools, and two rural district high schools. Their employment status in September 1987 was as follows:

Part time PEP coordinator	1
Teacher	4
Senior teacher	2
Guidance Officer	1
Deputy principal	2
Principal	5
School Development Consultant	6
Acting Superintendent	1

Total	22

(Some contributors held less senior positions during from 1984 to 1986, which would have been the period of their major PEP involvement).

4. Data collection

The interview style, format, and purpose was intended to approximate that which is described as appropriate to the 'ethnographic' evaluation model (Fetterman, 1984). Interviews were designed to focus on processes and issues, and to invite self and system evaluation. All were recorded. Specifically, the interviews were intended to facilitate reflection and to record the expression of opinion relating to the long term general effects of the Programme at school level; to the professional and administrative challenges which it has presented; and to the possible consequences of its discontinuance. Information on particular projects was not sought, but those interviewed often needed to discuss specific aspects of their experience in order to illustrate or to explain their views. Reference was made to Programme objectives, but not in order to limit discussion: a 'goal-free' approach was taken, as it was anticipated that some of the perceived benefits of the Programme would be only indirectly related to the Commonwealth's objectives.

This approach is a variant of 'illuminative evaluation' which according to Parlett and Hamilton (1978) is not a standard methodological package, but a 'general research strategy'. Aspects of this strategy are discussed in some detail by these authors, and are summarised by Talmage (1982) who terms the approach 'descriptive', and in tabular form (p600) lists the features which differentiate it from a number of alternatives. Parlett and Hamilton insist that an illuminative evaluation should not attempt to make judgments or recommendations: it is their view that the end of the evaluator's task is simply to produce *"an informed account of an innovation in action"*.

5. Procedure

Work was to have commenced on 1 September 1987 with interviews being completed by end of term (25 September). However, late provision of the list of contributors effectively delayed this phase of the project by five weeks: interviews could not be undertaken until the first week of final term. A necessary extension of the contract period was negotiated with the Executive Officer of the State Advisory Committee, Participation and Equity Programme, to whom occasional progress reports were being made.

Contributors were first contacted by mail late in September. Appendix 2 to this report includes a copy of the first contact letter (dated 21 September 1987), and of notes accompanying this, which were intended to clarify issues of confidentiality and document release. In effect, contributors were advised that both the Education Department and the PEP State Advisory Committee were by contract denied access to any notes or recordings of any conversations or interviews carried out in connection with the project, and that release of the final document to the State Advisory Committee would be subject to their approval. These procedures add to the complexity of report production, but are commonly considered necessary. Parlett and Hamilton, in discussing the problems of evaluation workers who attempt an illuminative approach, claim that:

"They seek and are given private opinions, often in confidence. They are likely to hear, in the course of their study, a great deal about personalities and institutional politics that others might be inquisitive to know. There are especially difficult decisions to make at the report stage: though full reporting is necessary, it is essential to safeguard the individual's privacy."

(Parlett and Hamilton 1978, p19)

All interviews were recorded. Most took place in the workplaces of contributors, at arranged times. The 22 recordings which were taped ran from 20 to 120 minutes: total running time is estimated at about 20 hours. An informal and interactive format was attempted, this being considered appropriate for the particular evaluation approach which had been selected. Interviews were unstructured only in that the interviewer's agenda was not explicit. Appendix 3 lists this agenda, in the form of a number of questions and propositions, which were put to interviewees only when necessary.

All tapes were audiotyped verbatim: except that the questions and comments of the interviewer were summarised, and any clearly irrelevant exchanges were omitted. This audiotyped text comprised the primary project database, and occupied 208kb of computer file space.

This primary database was scanned, and all blocks of text which were considered to be significant evaluative comment were first marked, and then coded according to a 32 item classification. Each block of marked text was then written to one of 32 files, which were then merged to produce a 'Quotes Database'. The result was a 68 page document consisting of numbered, classified, verbatim evaluative comments from all contributors, and a separate file linking comment numbers to the original microtapes. A first edit pass through this document was made in order to eliminate references to named schools, projects, or individuals, and a second was used to 'smooth' the raw text in order to make it acceptable in written form. Many of the comments selected for use required minor modification: they had been collected in an informal and interactive context, and included some vocabulary, grammar and syntax which though unremarkable in conversational English, would be distracting in print.

Every effort was made to minimise changes to text in order to preserve the sense of the recorded comments. Blocks of comment from the 'Quotes Database' were selected for use in the report on the basis of the commonality of the views expressed and the clarity of that expression. The aim was to present an accurate impression of the collective opinion of contributors, where consensus was apparent, but it also was considered important to represent dissenting views and comments indicating areas of concern.

Document release was negotiated with contributors in accordance with the undertaking given in September 1987 (see Appendix 2). A copy of the final contact letter to contributors, which accompanied their copy of the draft document, is also included.

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Appendix 2
Information to Contributors

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Participation and Equity Programme
A Western Australian Perspective

21 September 1987

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The Participation and Equity Programme State Advisory Committee is interested in the production of a descriptive report which summarises the experience of Western Australian schools. Aspects of this experience which the report should address include perceptions of:

- * the long term benefits of PEP
- * the administrative and professional challenges which were presented by the programme
- * possible consequences of its termination.

I have undertaken to write this report for the Committee, and have been given the names of a number of people whose contact with the programme has been significant, and whose contribution has been instrumental in progress towards programme objectives. The report is to be based on their experience and opinions, which will be collected by interview.

As you are one of these people, I'll be contacting you shortly in order to seek some of your time. Meanwhile, attached to this letter you'll find brief notes on some procedures which I will follow in my work on this project.

Charles Duffill

BW05/20:jjm01a

Participation and Equity Programme
A Western Australian Perspective

Notes on procedures to be followed during this project

The commissioned report is to represent the experiences and opinions of a selected group of individuals who have had significant contact with the Programme. Information will be collected from these contributors by interview.

Confidentiality

Notes or recordings which are made of any conversation or interview in connection with this project will remain confidential. By contract, both the Education Department and the PEP State Advisory Committee are denied access to such records. Any comment offered by a contributor will not be communicated to any other person except in the form of the project report, which contributors will be invited to approve at the draft stage.

Document release

The final report will be the property of the Education Department, which may circulate it appropriately. However, before it is released to the Executive Officer of the PEP State Advisory Committee, a draft copy of the document will be made available to all those who have contributed information or opinion. Contributors will be asked to satisfy themselves as to the fairness, relevance, accuracy, and anonymity with which the document represents their views. (Particular projects will not be identified, nor will contributors be referred to by name).

The draft document will be amended as required should any contributor consider it necessary on any of these grounds.

(The draft will be ready in December).

Charles Duffill
14 St Leonard's Avenue
Leederville 6007
(09) 381 1507

21 September 1987

BW05/20:jjm01a

CJ and C J Duffill
14 St Leonard's Avenue
Leederville 6007
Tel: (09) 381 1507

*Participation and Equity:
Western Australian Perspectives*

17 March 1988

&MrMs& &initials& &surname&
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&name&:

I enclose - for your comment and approval - a draft copy of the descriptive report which is being prepared for the Participation and Equity State Advisory Committee. This is in accordance with the undertaking I gave you in September last year:

"The final report will be the property of the Education Department, which may circulate it appropriately. However, before it is released to the Executive Officer of the PEP State Advisory Committee, a draft copy of the document will be made available to all those who have contributed information or opinion. Contributors will be asked to satisfy themselves as to the fairness, relevance, accuracy, and anonymity with which the document represents their views. (Particular projects will not be identified, nor will contributors be referred to by name)."

"The draft document will be amended as required should any contributor consider it necessary on any of these grounds."

As you'll recall, I had originally planned to have this draft ready for you in December: my apologies for the delay, which has been the result of a combination of minor hitches in the Ministry (most recently a two week delay in photocopying!) plus my need to accommodate other contract work. However, here it is! Many thanks for your help so far with this document.

cont...

Please note that:

1 This draft is provided for your information and use only - it should not be released until all contributors have had the opportunity to comment. Members of the commissioning State Committee have not yet sighted the document.

2 On the front cover of the draft there is some indication of how the final version will differ. Basically, the present 'working' text headings and markers will be replaced, and a contents page, an abstract, a concluding statement, and a technical appendix will be added.

3 You should return this document, together with any comment or any specific request for change, as soon as possible: I wish to print the final version on April 1 (not an auspicious date, I know!)

4 If you'd like to discuss any aspect of the text, phone me: I can usually be contacted on 381 1507, but will be at 380 2424 for perhaps several days each week during March. I'll return your call if I'm busy when you ring.

Thanks,

Charles Duffill

BW05/20:jjm03

Appendix 3
Interview Agenda

Appendix 3: Interview Agenda

1. When did you first become involved with PEP?
2. What does 'PEP' mean to you?
3. What changes have you seen which you think are due to PEP?
4. How is the school different as a result of PEP?
5. How does your PEP experience relate to the two objectives of the programme, that is, 'participation' and 'equity'?
6. Have you changed the way you work, or the way you think about your work?
7. What has been the impact of PEP on your colleagues?
8. How have students benefited?
9. Think 'long-term'. What do you think the long-term benefits of PEP will turn out to have been?
10. You've described some very important school developments. Some of these would have happened without PEP. What would this school now be like, if there had been no PEP involvement?
11. There must have been some real challenges, getting your school's PEP projects off the ground. What were they, and how did you overcome them?
12. What about administrative or bureaucratic difficulties?
13. What about the administration of PEP from head office? What have been the problems in that area?
14. What do you think will happen without PEP funding for your school?